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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
*Administration for Children and Families*



**Review and Analysis**

Region V Fatherhood Special Initiative Grants  
Early Head Start Demonstration Grants:

**Programs that Promote Father Involvement and  
Children's Early Literacy and Language Development**

**November 2004**

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## **1. Executive Summary**

This report presents a review and analysis of Region V's Fatherhood Special Initiative (FSI) and Early Head Start Fatherhood Demonstration grants. The grant awards were designed to promote father involvement and children's early literacy and language development (In this document, the terms "father involvement" and "male involvement" are used interchangeably). The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) spoke with Head Start and Early Head Start staff members over a four-month period to identify unique and innovative practices utilized by these grantees.

The grantees answered questions and described what they considered to be their best practices, major accomplishments, and lessons learned. Grantees provided examples of programs that they planned to retain and would recommend to others. The grantees discussed best practices that were grouped by six areas:

- The creation of father-friendly environments;
- Recruitment techniques;
- Planning activities;
- Staffing and training;
- Programming; and
- Collaborations and partnerships with community organizations.

The grantees' best practices included programs that assisted fathers in understanding how their children learn and encouraging fathers to read frequently to their children. Grantees described diverse events, each including a literacy component, to attract fathers to the Head Start program and the Head Start classroom. Grantees also commented on the need to pay continual attention to staffing and staff training.

Grantees identified many barriers that face fathers and work to preclude male participation in the Head Start program and in their children's lives. In addition, they identified means by which agencies help fathers overcome barriers while agencies continue to work closely with mothers.

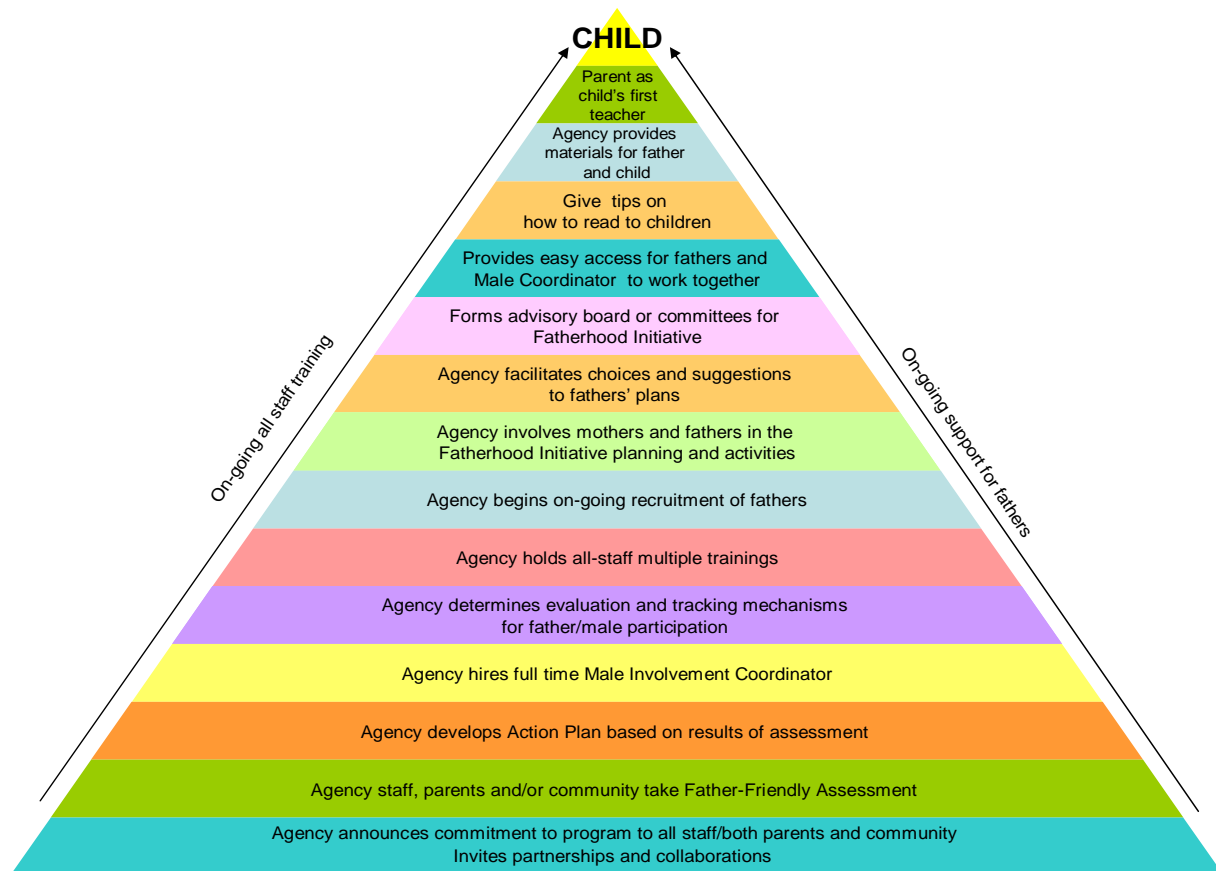
The grantees identified outcomes resulting from these fatherhood initiative programs. These included creating more father-friendly sites, enhancement of staff attitudes and behavior, increased male participation with their children and in the Head Start program, and the positive impact the male involvement programs are having in their communities. Grantees also described the methods by which they are attempting to retain the male involvement program by incorporating aspects of that work into the regular program.

Building from broad-based agency commitment, the FSI grantees work to support the father's role in the child's development. As shown in Figure 1 below, the child is the ultimate focus.

**Figure 1**  
**Keeping Our Eyes on the Child**

**"Children swell up with pride when fathers read to them"**

*Reported by Economic Opportunity Committee of St. Clair County, Port Huron, Michigan*



### **Overall Comments**

FSI grantees increased staffing time for creative fatherhood programs, purchased materials (such as father-friendly curricula and brochures), and offered incentives to encourage fathers to take active roles in the initiative. Grantees also acknowledged the importance of continuous staff training in fatherhood issues and programming, as well as the education of both parents on the role of the father as one of the child's first teachers. Managers of fatherhood programs have faced difficulties with recruiting and carrying out program goals when staff members, with limited experience in dealing with fathers, have not been in full support of the fatherhood initiative.

Grantees in each state acquired knowledge and experience with which to speak out and assist with building the FSI further in their own agency and to assist other Head Start programs in their areas. Recognizing staff and father talent and expertise helped achieve their fatherhood and early literacy objectives.

Many of the best practices identified in this report can be of value to other Head Start programs. Programs can assess which practices will work best for their centers.

## **1.1 Fatherhood Initiative Background**

The Fatherhood Initiative, one of the current national priorities of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), is intended to strengthen the role of fathers and significant males in order to help brighten the future for young children and their families. Within Region V, ACF has designed its Fatherhood efforts to carry out the following objectives: enhancing early literacy of children to improve school readiness and helping men become responsible, committed, involved fathers.

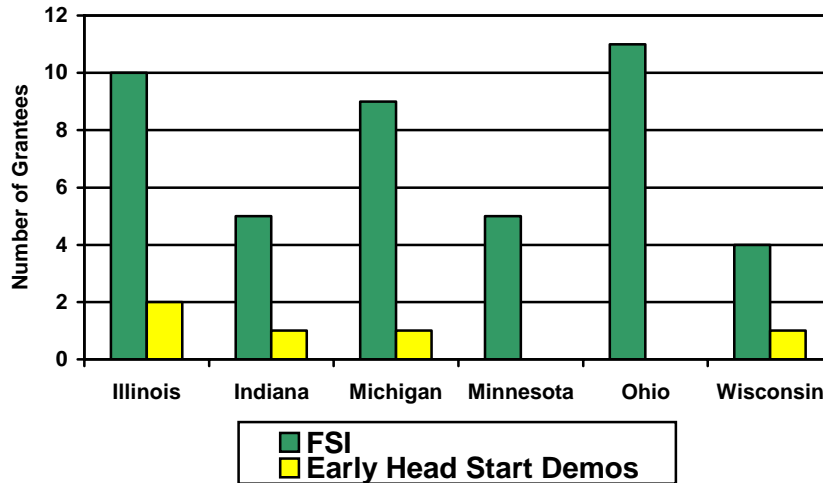
ACF Region V's commitment to the fatherhood initiative is illustrated by its leadership in the development and dissemination of the "Father-Friendliness Organizational Self-Assessment and Planning Tool" (hereafter referred to as the "Father-Friendly Assessment"), its on-going support of fatherhood collaborations, the efforts of the Region V Fatherhood Work Group, and the refinement of the 2004 ACF Fatherhood Strategic Plan for all ACF program areas.

Funding for fatherhood has contributed to several innovative grantee programs. In early 2001, five Region V grantees were among the 21 Federal Early Head Start programs that received three-year fatherhood demonstration grants. In April 2002, Head Start announced a competitive funding opportunity for Fatherhood Special Initiative (FSI) Literacy grants. In August 2002, 49 out of 100 grantees that applied for funds to develop projects to enhance the involvement of fathers/males in early literacy and language development of their children received a combined total of \$1,684,764 to implement these projects in Region V.

Figure 2 shows the number of grantees that received the FSI grant or Early Head Start Demonstration grant.

**Figure 2**  
**Number of FSI and Early Head Start Demonstration Grantees by State in Region V**

*This chart represents a total of 49 grantees*



## 2. Purpose of the Review

The purpose of this review was to analyze the degree to which grantees successfully implemented support activities to foster the FSI literacy initiative among children and their fathers or male role models and to enhance fatherhood involvement in Early Head Start and Head Start families. Region V goals through this review can be summarized as follows:

- Present the best practices identified by the grantees, and analyze how these approaches were carried out in their programs; and
- Identify the advice that grantees would give to other Head Start agencies starting a fatherhood program.

### 2.1 Methodology

Telephone conversations served as the information-gathering tool for the purpose of this review and were conducted from August 2003 to December 2003. ACF conducted the conversations with the staff person responsible for the agency's fatherhood initiative. When available, Head Start Directors joined staff members for group interviews. In some cases, grantees designated several people at an agency (e.g., literacy specialist, contractor) as appropriate points of contact. Most phone conversations lasted between sixty and ninety minutes, and

were completed in one session. However, some grantees suggested that ACF contact another staff member who began the grant program. In addition, some grantees voluntarily sent sample materials they had developed.

## **2.2 Variations in Grantees Expertise**

During the course of the conversations, ACF noted a variation in the level of expertise among grantee staff. Listed below are the factors that led to that variation.

- *Staff knowledge was dependent upon background/experience.*  
For example, educational backgrounds and managerial expertise affected what the individual regarded as best practices, especially with respect to funding, retention and staffing considerations. Also, Male Involvement Coordinators often did not have in-depth information on literacy efforts in the classroom.
- *Inconsistent staff knowledge due to time commitments and length of time on job.*  
Staff, who were present at the onset of a program or through much of its duration described many best practices, shared numerous lessons learned and presented their major accomplishments from various stages of the program's course. In some cases, the designated fatherhood point of contact was unsure why a particular program had been started or why plans for the program had been changed or discontinued.
- *Disconnect between the staff person who was currently running a program and the staff member who applied for the grant or asked for an extension.*  
When the grant-funding period ended, some programs did not continue employment of the staff hired with grant funds to work on the fatherhood initiative. This necessitated bringing in a new staff member to manage the program in addition to that staff member's other tasks in the agency.
- *Gender differences among the male involvement coordinator position.*  
Gender differences may have influenced what individuals contributed as well as their opinions on the benefits of having a male as the fatherhood involvement coordinator. However, this diversity in background did provide a rich source of information about what has been going on in the field of fatherhood involvement as represented by these agencies who have received grant funding.

### **3. Best Practices**

The initial grant announcement suggested that agencies consider a wide array of activities for the special Fatherhood Literacy program from designing training programs to help fathers better understand how their children learn to read to encouraging fathers to participate on Policy Councils.

Diverse best practices were presented, which are categorized into the following six areas outlined below.

- Building Father-Friendly Environments;
- Recruitment;
- Planning, Surveys, and Advisory Boards;
- Staffing and Staff training;
- Programming for Father/Child Literacy; and
- Community Collaborations and Partnerships.

(See Appendix C for a complete list of the descriptions of best practices and major accomplishments.)

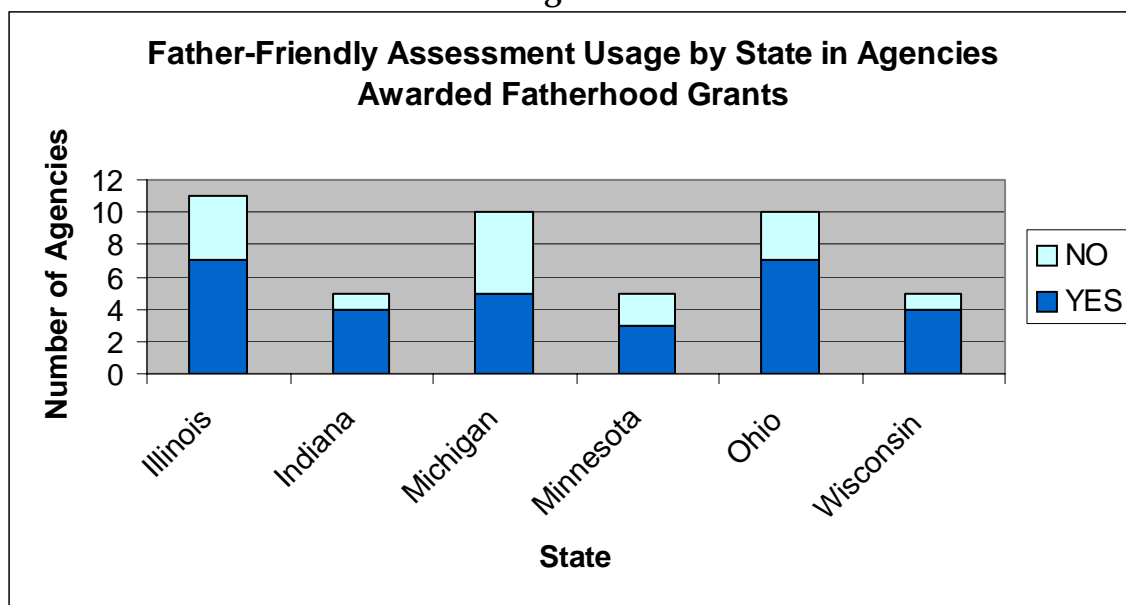
#### **3.1 Best Practices: Building Father-Friendly Environments**

Individuals were aware that parental involvement, a key Head Start goal, has often translated in practice to mother involvement within their agencies, and many looked upon the award of a father-child focused grant as an opportunity to address gender imbalances. Many agencies noted that staff members were surprised to find that co-workers harbored anti-male attitudes to a degree that merited remediation. Numerous individuals stressed the need for the agency to become more father-friendly and male-friendly in order to facilitate more male involvement in children's lives. Grantee staff were uniformly aware of the need to focus on their agency's current environment toward males, and this focus permeated the discussions on best practices, major accomplishments and lessons learned for most grantees (with the exception of those agencies with long histories of male involvement).

Thirty of the FSI and Early Head Start Demonstration grantees reported that staff utilized the "Father-Friendly Assessment" or a variant thereof (Figure 3). Individuals at three agencies did not know if staff at their agencies had used the assessment tool.



Figure 3



*Comparison is based on a total of 46 Fatherhood grantees reporting that staff had taken the assessment or a variant. The “Father-Friendly Assessment” was developed through the partnership of the National Center for Strategic Non-Profit Planning and Community Leadership (NPCL), the National Head Start Association (NHSA), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, Region V, and the Illinois Department of Public Aid, Division of Child Support Enforcement.*

Grantees that completed the assessment tool cited that a related best practice was to take action based on the assessment tool. Four of the 46 sites developed their own assessment instruments because they were not satisfied with the structure of the responses of the Father-Friendly Assessment.

For those grantees that did not employ the assessment tool, 26% (13 of 49) commented that one of their major accomplishments was their work in developing a father-friendly site. Even those who felt fathers had always been welcome at their agencies talked about improving the environment to make it more father-friendly.

On the phone calls, staff members expressed their dedication to making sure that their agencies’ surroundings clearly indicated a commitment to serving fathers. Staff members examined the sites critically, looking for items or objects that could be deemed overtly male negative or male absent. They took a variety of paths to remedy deficiencies or questionable practices. Staff reviewed and changed visual aids and language used in grantee written materials. They removed negative or single gender posters, and bought, developed, or installed materials that included more males, reflected positive attitudes toward males, showed positive male-child interactions, and portrayed male community

workers. For example, staff at one site removed a poster that emphasized men “Flying the Coop” upon a baby’s arrival.

Many grantees developed their own more welcoming posters and materials. They used pictures taken at the grantees’ own events that showed their own fathers, males, and children. Staff members recognized this type of activity as a way to localize materials and to depict the actual demographic composition of the particular site to make the environment more comfortable for fathers.

Bulletin Board postings acted as not only an important vehicle to make a site more inclusive and more male friendly, but also as a visual to strengthen communication of what is happening in the Head Start agency. Males would see pictures of successful events in which other men and children were taking part, and they would be encouraged to take part the next time the event was offered.

Grantees purchased magazines and books that were male-centered or gender neutral, added children’s books that included images and stories about fathers, and assessed whether purchases for parent programs would be “too female” for fathers to want to participate. One interviewee reported that a male remarked that the site “seemed feminine with frilly stuff,” while another man commented that available raffle items, such as cosmetics and hair products, were geared for women. Some sites offer father incentives such as shaving cream and gift certificates for barbershop visits to encourage involvement. Staff members explained to men that they should not be put off by non-accommodating symbols (e.g., the child size furniture), but rather that men should realize that the centers are a place for men to visit and become involved with the activities.

Some grantees reported developing mission statements and male involvement goals. Goals included the implementation of new male involvement activities, the inclusion of male-friendly language in new materials, revised staff job descriptions, and the encouragement of fathers’ involvement with their children and in a broad range of agency roles. Of the 49 grantees, 21 remarked that the changes in their agency came from the development or modification of forms, especially for intake and enrollment. The forms now gather previously uncaptured information, such as the father’s identity or the existence of other males significant in the child’s life. Some agencies have developed a release form to be signed by the mother, allowing the grantee to gather information on the non-resident father and to disseminate information to him. Another grantee has added lines and spaces on the forms in order to collect non-resident, custody, and grandparent information. Even in instances where a grantee did not make any formal changes in mission statement, policy, or data gathering, staff remarked that there was new emphasis on how policies were being carried out

(e.g., no longer leaving blanks on paternal questions and no longer ignoring pursuit of the information about fathers from mothers).

With the additional information provided by revised forms, grantees recognized their agencies' very diverse population comprised of "fathers/other males" at their agencies. They have taken steps to involve divorced fathers, stepfathers, adoptive fathers, boyfriends, uncles, older brothers, custodial and non-custodial fathers, parents with shared parenting arrangements and grandparents in the program. This new knowledge has affected program planning. Increased information about the fathers (such as the noted increase in single fathers having custody) has resulted in scheduling changes at centers and at home visits, and raised the awareness of the need for flexibility and choices in programming.

After taking the Father-Friendly assessment and studying their agency's forms, many grantees recognized the barriers facing many fathers that hold them back from involvement with their children or at the agency and what actions by the agency would help fathers overcome these barriers. The agencies learned that they needed to provide diverse scheduling, help with childcare and transportation and provide food. Table 1 lists the numerous barriers that grantees identified, and some of the action steps taken to overcome them.

**Table 1**  
**Grantees Identifying and Overcoming**  
**Barriers to Father/Male Involvement**

Identifying Barriers	Overcoming Barriers
<i>Low literacy of fathers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Referrals for literacy</li><li>■ Referrals for high school equivalency degrees</li><li>■ Audio books and tapes</li><li>■ Instructional Guides for children's books</li><li>■ Personal phone calls</li><li>■ Modeling how to play and read with children</li><li>■ Simplifying materials</li><li>■ Hands-on activities</li><li>■ Face to face communication</li><li>■ Staff trained in Adult Literacy tutoring</li><li>■ Helping fathers fill out forms</li><li>■ Giving information/instructions orally</li></ul>

Identifying Barriers	Overcoming Barriers
<i>Economic pressures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Serving food</li> <li>■ Providing child care</li> <li>■ Reimbursing transportation costs</li> <li>■ Holding job fairs</li> <li>■ Assisting with resumes and job placement</li> <li>■ Networking in the community for jobs</li> <li>■ Offering incentives, rewards, gift certificates</li> <li>■ Providing materials for take-home projects</li> <li>■ Giving books, newspapers, library cards</li> <li>■ Providing clothing for interviews, jobs</li> <li>■ Offering payment for written articles</li> </ul>
<i>Time pressures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Planned time frames</li> <li>■ Flexible schedules</li> <li>■ Multiple choices for program times</li> <li>■ Rotation of times</li> <li>■ Additional slots for parent conferences/home visits</li> <li>■ Providing ideas for brief home activities</li> </ul>
<i>Transportation problems: Distance; Lack of cars; and Lack of public transportation.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Money for transportation reimbursement</li> <li>■ Sharing transportation</li> <li>■ Rotation of sites for programs</li> <li>■ Phone and e-mail communication</li> <li>■ Legal assistance with license suspension</li> </ul>
<i>Legal problems: Paternity establishment; Child support; License suspension; and Incarceration.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Providing child support information and referrals</li> <li>■ Providing information on visitation and custody</li> <li>■ Help with credit problems</li> <li>■ Referrals for legal assistance</li> <li>■ Speakers on legal issues</li> <li>■ Supporting families with incarcerated parents</li> </ul>
<i>Lack of confidence of fathers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Support groups</li> <li>■ Mentors</li> <li>■ Recognition of father/male contributions</li> <li>■ Building on father/male talents and suggestions</li> </ul>
<i>Female staff reluctance/attitudes toward men</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Staff training</li> <li>■ Leadership from top</li> <li>■ Clear mission statements and goals</li> <li>■ Publicizing research on the importance of fathers</li> <li>■ Support services to mothers/staff</li> </ul>
<i>Mother as gatekeeper</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Information on Child Support and paternity establishment; access and visitation; fathers rights and responsibilities</li> <li>■ Publicizing research on importance of fathers</li> <li>■ On-going explanation of importance of male role models</li> <li>■ Proactive in encouraging mothers to share information about fathers/males</li> <li>■ Scheduling home visits when fathers/males are home</li> <li>■ Networking in community</li> <li>■ Meeting separately with NCPs at parent conferences</li> </ul>

Identifying Barriers	Overcoming Barriers
<i>Language barriers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Use of videos and videotaping</li> <li>■ Referrals for ESL classes</li> <li>■ Multi- or bi-lingual staff and support network</li> <li>■ Face to face communication</li> <li>■ Multilanguage materials and audio books</li> <li>■ Mentors</li> <li>■ Site specific programs providing information on community resources</li> <li>■ Staff trained in ESL</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural differences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Fathers and mothers involved in planning</li> <li>■ Site specific programs</li> <li>■ Recognition of cultures in on-going programming and scheduling</li> <li>■ Non-traditional programming</li> <li>■ Multicultural on-going staff training</li> </ul>
<i>Funding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Incorporate father/male program into budget</li> <li>■ Solicit funds from various sources</li> <li>■ Network broadly for support for specific events</li> <li>■ Explore new funding streams</li> <li>■ Utilize free community resources</li> <li>■ Solicit small grants from diverse businesses</li> </ul>

Staff members considered the process of tailoring the program schedule to the schedules of the fathers as a best practice. Several individuals commented on the benefits to the fathers and children if the father could establish a special, set-aside time to do things with his child and how they could help fathers do this.

In recognition of father-male working schedules, which would benefit working mothers as well, agencies have changed father involvement and family program hours and days, rotated sites, and repeated programs in order to include more males in their programs and offerings. Under these more flexible schedules, home visitors are better able to meet with fathers during their visits, and teachers can meet fathers at parent conferences.

Many grantees mentioned the importance of having food at all father/male events, preferably a full dinner. Several fathers experienced issues when reporting to the site directly from work. Serving food at the Head Start event could diminish the problems faced by those working or low-income men coming directly from work or taking children out to eat. In order to encourage participation, grantees adopted the practice of naming a program or event with food in the title: Pancakes for Pa, Doughnuts for Dads, Dad and Me Pizza.

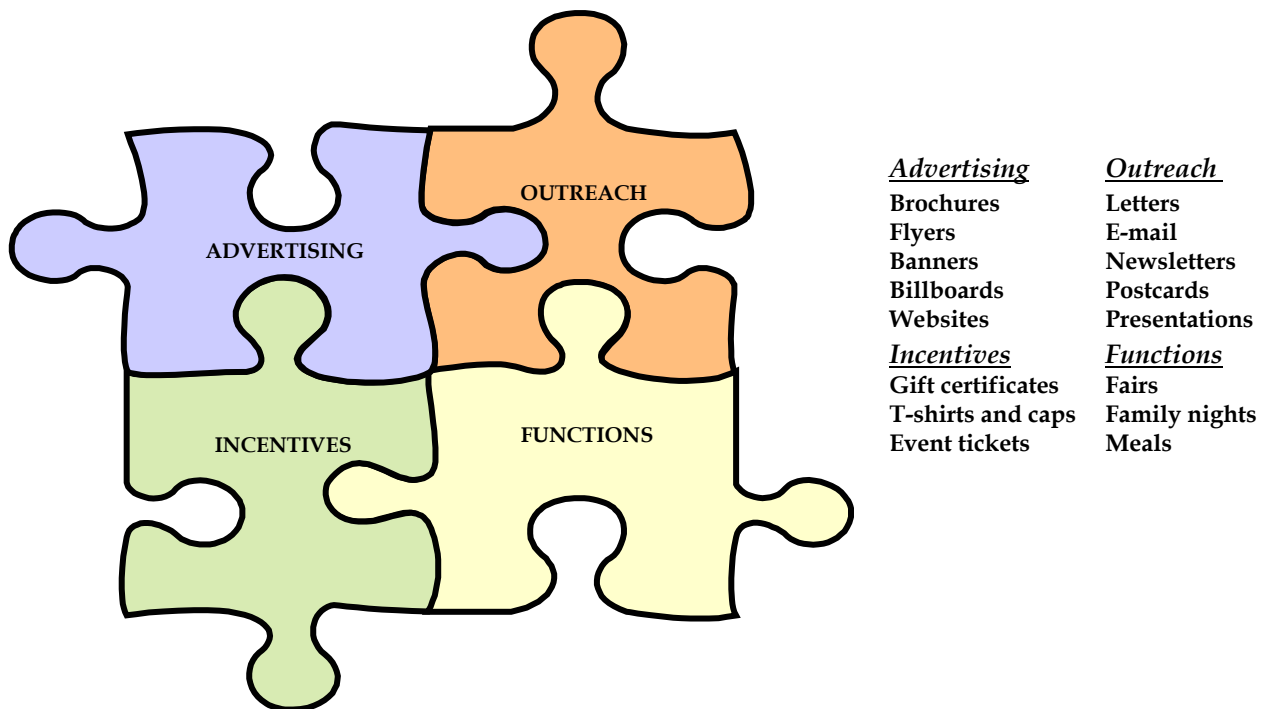
### Unique Best Practices Identified by Grantees for Building Father-Friendly Sites

- Using teams of staff and parents to go to each site to do the assessment.
- Developing a database to collect/track extended families' contact information.
- Using actual photos of children and men from the site to make homemade posters instead of purchasing commercial posters.
- Dedicating a manager to a caseload strictly for non-custodial parents (NCPs).
- Offering job-training programs for fathers.
- Offering a "coffee house setting" for culturally diverse fathers to have a place where they can come and talk about education and childrearing.

### 3.2 Best Practices: Recruitment

Many grantees stated that the existence of a strong recruitment program was a significant factor in bringing in fathers to the Head Start program. The majority felt a need for concerted efforts at recruitment. They identified and recommended multiple approaches and recruitment methods. Specifically, they pointed to many marketing, outreach, and recruitment efforts utilized to get men to come to the program and to advertise the program to the community.

**Figure 4**  
Recruitment vehicles used by FSI and Early Head Start Demonstration Grantees



Many grantees promoted outreach efforts such as the distribution of individualized letters to fathers, especially non-resident fathers. An individual commented that “the men were thrilled to get the letter in the mail” because in the past men had not received any type of Head Start information addressed directly to them.

There was agreement among many individuals that the annual Head Start Opening Year events, such as Orientation, were key to recruitment. At these early events, staff members could reach out to both parents about the male involvement program since both parents were more likely to be present. “Pull them in as a family” was one approach advocated by a staff member. Grantees who sought the mothers’ buy-in for their father program or for a specific father activity noted that mothers helped promote male participation, often with positive results. Once the grantee got the mothers excited about fathers’ activities, staff members found it easier to recruit fathers.

Grantees identified the importance of frequent community contact to give exposure to the program and to recruit men from partnering organizations. A member of one Head Start’s Male Advisory committee is an employee of a state employment agency and has given Head Start fathers training and employment information.

Grantees indicated the importance of developing newsletters as outreach and communication vehicles. Some agencies have a dedicated fatherhood newsletter in addition to the agency newsletter. One newsletter with a “Dad’s Corner” provided updates on the fatherhood/male involvement program activities every three to four weeks, with hints to fathers on how to read to their children, and information on what is age-appropriate play. Since newsletters are distributed to every family, Head Start staff members make neutral statements so that the newsletters work for both mothers and fathers.

Outreach and recruitment must be continuing processes. One site mentioned renewed recruitment efforts just as the grant period was ending. An individual suggested that agencies should make outreach for father involvement part of the job descriptions for family support workers so that “everyone knows that father involvement is a program goal.” Others stated that all staff need to do outreach and recruitment for fatherhood/male involvement. Several individuals mentioned the outreach role of the bus driver, often a male. The bus driver knows when men are in the home and knows the names of the men who take their children to the bus stop and pick them up. Further, the bus driver greets the men regularly and reminds them of upcoming fatherhood events.

### **Unique Best Practices Identified by Grantees for Recruitment**

- Staff members took a “team marketing class” that helped one agency develop their materials.
- Fathers designed a Fatherhood/Male Involvement T-shirt specifically to be worn in the community.
- Having the Male Involvement Coordinator, support staff, and fathers ride the buses to meet and greet new fathers on a daily basis.
- Identifying “outreach workers for father involvement” at each site.
- Placing outreach and father involvement program responsibilities in job descriptions of staff at all levels of the organization.
- Building a unique outreach role for fathers/ men in the recruitment of other men as an activity of the Male Advisory Committee.
- Involve the child in outreach by having the child draw two invitations; one for mother and one for the non-resident father.

### **3.3 Best Practices: Planning, Surveys and Advisory Boards**

Grantees recognized the necessity for an effective planning process that is tailored to the site and involves fathers and advisory committees early on in that process. Planning becomes more complex as sites identify and learn about the diversity of males in their agencies and realize that one program does not fit all fathers or the objectives of that grantee.

Grantees cited the importance of doing surveys before plans are made for fathers as a best practice. Staff members indicated that it was important to solicit input from fathers before an agency made plans so that fathers can participate in choosing training subjects and activities. Also, staff members stressed the importance of keeping fathers’ interests and decisions in the forefront of the planning process, and tailoring those activities to reflect the diversity not only of the fathers involved, but the site itself. In order to learn about fathers’ interests, staff members conducted surveys during home visits, by mailings, and at meetings. For example, one male interest survey showed that fathers wished to work together with other males on projects, as they liked this type of male interaction. A survey of fathers showed that men were interested in building books, toys, puzzles, and playhouses with their children.

Some grantees pointed to the importance of enabling fathers to take ownership of the fatherhood program by playing an active part in planning the events, choosing from a variety of activities and participating in the curriculum



selection. This approach to planning requires a father-friendly environment that promotes healthy interactions between fathers and grantee staff, where a father can speak freely, question site decisions in a constructive manner, and ask for help when needed. The following is a case study that examines how a grantee worked with a father's idea to plan and build a successful literacy program.

### **Best Practice Case Study in Planning and Male Involvement:**

#### **"Men In the Kitchen: Our Cookbook"**

"Men In the Kitchen: Our Cookbook" is the successful product of Clermont County Child Focus (CCCCF) Inc, Early Childhood Division, of Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Head Start Father's Cookbook features fathers' recipes, along with photos of the fathers and their children. A Cook Off was held in conjunction with the initial release of the book. CCCCf makes the cookbook available for sale, with the proceeds of these sales helping to retain the fatherhood program. According to the Head Start father whose idea started this program: "With so many male role models participating, the Cook Off will continue to grow stronger."

The steps taken to accomplish this best practice:

- Grantee staff members worked at making the men feel comfortable.
- Staff members took one father's idea and fathers discussed it at each site.
- Fathers designated a Point of Contact at each center to collect recipes from others fathers at their center.
- Staff members took father/child photos for the cookbook to ensure interest in purchasing the finished product.
- Fathers planned the Cook Off.
- All fathers were invited and encouraged to come and cook.
- Mothers were invited to give a recipe but not be judged, as the Cook Off remained focused on father involvement.
- The women voted for the best recipes from each category. The winners received a certificate and a special apron. Fathers also gave out special t-shirts and hats printed up for the event.
- Clermont County Child Focus has kept interest high by making the Cook Off an annual event (three years running at this point).

The success of this case study resulted from the willingness of grantee management and staff to take a father's idea, invest staff time and agency funding into the idea. CCCCf continued its efforts by delegating responsibility to the fathers and promoting the book and Cook Off to ensure its success. This

activity ultimately increased male involvement, and served as a source of pride for fathers, children, and the grantee staff. According to the interviewee, Clermont County Child Focus “sent the message to the men that their presence was wanted.”

Grantees acknowledged the development of male advisory boards and committees as both a best practice and a major accomplishment. The approaches varied with agencies. One grantee brought in fathers from each Head Start center to take part in planning committees. Some grantees utilized fathers on the Policy Council or the parent committees. Grantees with advisory boards looked to community groups, partnerships, and collaborations for male representation, including public and faith-based organizations. Grantees looked to these groups to assist with ideas and enhancements to the programs.

Grantees believed that the primary function of surveys, advisory committees, and boards was to incorporate what fathers wanted in the program without making assumptions about those wishes. Grantees stated that the fathers’ ownership of a program increased male participation, developed self-confidence among the men and trust in the Head Start program, provided leadership possibilities, and led to future participation in the Policy Council and the growth of the program.

#### **Unique Best Practices Identified by Grantees For Advisory Boards and Committees**

- Creating groups comprised of community representatives, fathers, and male leadership from each center.
- Inviting mothers to take part in Fatherhood Program Advisory Committees.
- Having one board member serve from each county, split between parents, staff members, and community members/partnering agencies.

### **3.4 Best Practices: Staffing and Staff training**

Grantees viewed getting “buy in” from staff members throughout the agency concerning the importance of the program as critical. Grantees commented that staff had to know why father involvement is important to children’s development and to emergent literacy. Grantees stressed that all staff had to be trained including Home Visitors, Family Service Workers, classroom teachers, and the fatherhood coordinators, and started staff trainings on the role of father involvement by having each staff member take an assessment.

Staff training for the male involvement coordinators varied greatly. One agency reported that they had no formal training in place; rather, the coordinator received fatherhood materials from the agency Director who attended conferences. Others identified dedicated training as a Best Practice: all-day Saturday trainings for all staff members with extra staff hours paid for from the grant. One site stated that it was necessary to bring in the community for training. They brought in adult education experts from the local community college for training while other grantees brought in speakers from the Child Support agency. Grantees stated that they did reach out to the technical assistance contractor for assistance.

Few agencies reported inviting fathers to participate in staff trainings and staff in-services, although this practice was one of the suggested programs in the grant announcement. Only two agencies invited fathers in as speakers to talk with agency staff about their personal involvement as fathers and what they would like to see in the program, but both agencies recommended this practice to other Head Start centers. Other agencies provided training opportunities for staff and fathers by sending them to fatherhood workshops at conferences.

Many grantees stated that all staff members, not just the male coordinator, must be involved with the FSI by greeting men daily, reaching out to the men, and bringing men into the classroom and Head Start governing bodies.

Grantees stated the advantage of having a full-time male involvement coordinator position filled by a male if possible, and some stated that women acting in this capacity have had a more difficult path. For example, some individuals noted that men have been reluctant to talk about relationship issues with women. Further, female staff members have had difficulty pointing out weaknesses in reading and language, while grantees also observed that men felt more comfortable in reaching out to other men for help or assistance.

Additionally, grantees were aware that cultural differences precluded some men from approaching women to talk about family concerns such as education. Several individuals stated that females could succeed, especially if they have support from male advisory boards and committees, male community volunteers, male contractors and male trainers. Another program designated staff at each site to form a Male Involvement team. Other grantees were fortunate to have male staff in the agency at all levels to assist. In some cases, bus drivers entered the site to augment the male presence and “handle breaks for staff members, serve lunch to the children, brush their teeth afterward, do crafts, and play with them.” A “wish list” for improving fatherhood involvement staffing, includes the following:

- Involving staff at all levels to assist with the fatherhood programs;
- Placing more male staff throughout agency;
- Hiring full-time Male Coordinators;
- Using a female co-worker to assist with the fatherhood program;
- Providing clerical support;
- Involving literacy specialists and classroom staff members;
- Assigning Outreach staff at all sites; and
- Creating a Male Involvement Coordinator backup role.

#### **Unique Practices Identified by Grantees for Staffing and Training**

- Building a Fatherhood Training Team that is available to go to other Head Start centers to train on fatherhood and literacy issues.
- Providing training for staff on outreach and marketing techniques.
- Having staff complete adult literacy tutor training.
- Having fathers attend staff literacy training.

### **3.5 Best Practices: Programming for Father/Child Literacy**

The literacy focus of the FSI grant was considered a programming advantage by many. Grantees viewed fatherhood and literacy as “a good fit.” Most agencies shared the common approach of giving books to the fathers and children. Books bought with grant funds gave many children the chance to own books for the first time. Grantees saw the sharing of books as a way for a father to connect with a child and to give the child his undivided attention.

The formats of the programs were distributed among literacy-based events (e.g., reading contests, reading marathons), father-child outings (e.g., sporting events, fishing, nature hikes, zoo visits), and hands-on activities (e.g., making books, building toys). There was widespread agreement among grantees that “hands-on”, “sports-themed”, and “outing”-based father-child activities were very successful programs.

One of the most important aspects of most of these programs was the inclusion of the literacy component into whatever programmatic theme was used. Regardless of the event (a visit to the zoo, a fishing trip, a swimming day, or a skating day), agency staff members included set times for the occurrence of literacy activities.

The table below shows examples of the father/child programs. Each program was designed to have a literacy component. Examples of the literacy components included: reading contests, public readings, book-theme activities, recording “audio” books, and videotaping father-child reading sessions.

**Table 2**  
**Variety of Father/Child Programs with Literacy Component**

<b>Outings</b>	<b>Sports</b>	<b>Hands-On</b>	<b>Conferences</b>
Zoo Visits	Bowling	Writing Books	Parent Conferences
Nature Hikes	Skating	Creating Books	National Speakers
Train Trips	Swimming	Creating Portfolios	Open Houses
Picnics	Fishing	Building Bird Houses	Book Fairs
Buddy Days	Softball	Building Puzzles	Literacy-a-thons
Fathers' Nights	Basketball	Building Toys	Pregnancy trainings
Ball Games	Soccer	Cooking	
Bookstore Visits	Horseback Riding	Serving meals	
Library Visits		Poetry Writing	
Racecar Driving		Fashion Shows	
		Taking Photographs	
		Making Scrapbooks	
		Making Bulletin Boards	

Grantees indicated that fathers wanted a variety of choices reflective of the diversity of fathers in their community and the activities popular in that community.

#### **Unique Best Practices for Programming in Father-Child Literacy:**

- Recording “Audio” books by male volunteers so that families of low reading ability would have recorded books if fathers were not present, or had difficulty reading.
- Giving two books to a father/child if the father was a non-resident father.
- Paying fathers to write for the newsletter.
- Building a special literacy resource location.
- Encouraging poetry writing among Head Start fathers.
- Photographing and videotaping fathers and children as a motivational and educational tool, as well as a tracking method.
- Providing “Reading Calendars” and incentives to the fathers for tracking the extent of reading performed with their child.
- Developing a guide for fathers on how to read books to their children.

### **3.6 Best Practices: Community Collaborations and Partnerships**

Agencies have developed various community collaborations and partnerships to help establish the fatherhood program as a whole, while some of the collaborations or partnerships have been forged to work on a particular type of event. With respect to the program as a whole, collaborations helped to get men interested and involved in the program by having community males join policy councils, male advisory boards and male planning committees. In addition, collaborative partners provided various incentives to encourage fathers' participation. In one instance, a collaborative partner from the private sector furnished doughnuts at all of the sites each month for the duration of the program. In another instance, a public sector collaborative partner helped several agencies with special fishing events designed to relate to child-father literacy. Community partnerships have also been established to provide sources of referrals for fathers for such diverse purposes as child support, mentoring, adult education and counseling.

Community members can help agencies evaluate their programs to see if benchmarks have been reached and help with fund raising and grant development. By bringing in non-Head start males, an agency can bolster its male participation numbers and provide the critical mass needed to attract more Head Start fathers.

The five Early Head Start Demonstration Programs all fulfilled their special grant requirement to collaborate with Child Support. However, it is interesting to note that at least seven of the Fatherhood Initiative grantees also built relationships with Child Support. One agency from a large urban city mentioned that their Best Practice was partnering and bringing in Child Support to help fathers and staff.

Growing recognition of Head Start male involvement programs in the fatherhood arena has led to invitations for the coordinators of these programs to join and often to take on leadership roles in these organizations. The events sponsored by these fatherhood groups offer opportunities for Head Start fathers to speak out in the community and to work to affect change in state and county policies and legislation.

As male involvement programs in Head Start gain recognition, Head Start male involvement coordinators are being looked to as leaders in the community. Male involvement coordinators and fathers are taking active roles in many fatherhood and community service groups, including:

- Wayne County Fatherhood Collaboration;
- Michigan Fatherhood Coalition;
- Central Indiana Fatherhood Network;
- North Central Indiana Fatherhood Network;
- Illinois Fatherhood Initiative;
- Ohio Practitioners Fatherhood Network Planning Board;
- Ohio Guidelines (Child Support) Forum;
- Milwaukee County fatherhood Initiative;
- Madison Fatherhood Alliance; and
- Minnesota Father and Family Network.

### Unique Best Practices in Community Partnerships

- Brotherhood of Black Fire Fighters supports the fatherhood program.
- Fishing trips partnered with a state-level natural resources agency.
- Krispy Kreme furnishes ten dozen doughnuts for each site within a particular agency for their monthly “Donuts for Dads” event.
- Partnership with a Community College for FLOW (Family Literacy on Wheels)

## 4. Outcomes

The major outcomes of the program, based on the previously noted material and on the responses to the “Lessons Learned” question (See Appendix D for a grouped list of grantees lessons learned) are summarized below.

**Table 3**  
**Major Outcomes from the Grantees’ Involvement**  
**With the Fatherhood Special Initiative**

Outcomes	Details
New Male Involvement Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Twenty-five grantees established new programs.</li> </ul>
More Comfortable, Father-Friendly Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Thirty grantees took an assessment of some kind.</li> <li>▪ Grantees altered appearance of their sites with father-friendly materials.</li> <li>▪ Grantee Interviews revealed follow-up needs:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify frequency and participation levels among fathers.</li> <li>▪ Identify how agencies are applying lessons learned from the assessment.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Staff Attitudes and Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recognized that not all staff members are comfortable with the program.</li> <li>▪ Recognized that negative/uninterested attitudes affect treatment of male parents and the accomplishments of the program.</li> <li>▪ Recognized need to communicate with the father directly.</li> </ul>

Outcomes	Details
Increased Male Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Thirty-six grantees cited increased male participation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Visiting the Head Start center more frequently.</li> <li>▪ Being involved with Home Visits and parent conferences.</li> <li>▪ Signing up for educational offerings, father-child computer courses.</li> <li>▪ Reading to their children.</li> <li>▪ Participating in Policy Councils and parent committees.</li> <li>▪ Taking leadership roles.</li> <li>▪ Volunteering at the agency.</li> <li>▪ Taking part in community efforts focused on fatherhood.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Efforts to Track Father Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Classroom attendance sheets.</li> <li>▪ Participation and attendance at events.</li> <li>▪ Number of books checked out from the agency library.</li> <li>▪ Number of books given to fathers and children.</li> <li>▪ Number of library cards obtained.</li> <li>▪ Number of father/child reading sessions.</li> <li>▪ Length of time for each reading session.</li> <li>▪ Father and child develop books together and build portfolios.</li> <li>▪ Videotaping the father-child reading sessions.</li> <li>▪ Grantee Interviews revealed follow-up needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Track father literacy or language development efforts formally</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>NOTE: Programs with a longer history of male involvement programs had more educational and development programs for fathers than the newer Fatherhood Initiative programs.</p>
Positive Impact on Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First program devoted to father interest in some communities.</li> <li>▪ Joined existing fatherhood efforts in the county or state.</li> <li>▪ Provided an opportunity for fathers to take on speaking roles in the community and contribute to advocacy on fatherhood concerns.</li> </ul>
Learning Experiences for Fathers and Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provided opportunities for fathers and children to learn together.</li> <li>▪ Highlighted males in the roles of readers</li> <li>▪ Demonstrated to fathers and children that reading can be enjoyable.</li> <li>▪ Gave fathers supportive ways to spend time with and help their children.</li> <li>▪ Fathers have gained knowledge about the importance of early learning.</li> <li>▪ Provided free or low-cost settings to spend valuable time with their children.</li> </ul>
Building Libraries for Fathers and Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provided opportunities for children to own books and read them at home.</li> <li>▪ Created stronger, more varied agency libraries.</li> <li>▪ Provided books in English and Spanish as program incentives.</li> <li>▪ Used gift certificates and point systems with which to purchase books.</li> <li>▪ Provided reading materials (books, guides, magazines) for fathers.</li> </ul>



#### **4.1 New Male Involvement Programs**

With the award of the FSI grant, twenty-five grantees established new Fatherhood male involvement programs.

#### **4.2 More Comfortable, Father-Friendly Sites**

Grantees that used the Father-Friendly Assessment discovered that they needed to change their sites by building father-friendly environments so that men would feel more comfortable. Thirty of the grantees reported taking an assessment of some kind, and nearly all of those grantees altered the physical appearance of their sites by displaying father-friendly materials, such as:

- “Dads Make A Difference” banners;
- “Men At W.O.R.K. (Working on Relationships with Kids)” brochures;
- “Walking Tall: Hands-On Hearts-On Fathering” brochure;
- “Kids Need Their Dad” calendars; and
- “Be the Father You Choose to Be” posters.

Agencies that did not use an assessment were not as aware of their shortcomings. However, some grantees that did take an assessment did not or could not elaborate on the timing, frequency, or participation level of the assessment. Furthermore, agencies did not reveal how they are applying other lessons learned from the assessment aside from making the agency become more father-friendly.

#### **4.3 Staff Attitudes and Behavior**

Grantees have provided varying amounts of education and training to staff on the importance of male role models and the role of fathers as their child’s first teacher. In doing so, management and co-workers recognized that not all staff members are comfortable with the program. The development of the FSI and the Early Head Start Demonstrations have, at some agencies, brought out negative stereotypes of men held by staff that affect how staff work and relate to male parents. Grantees recognized that negative and uninterested attitudes affect treatment of male parents and the accomplishments of the program. Increased staff knowledge has made a difference in staff behavior, such as talking to male parents (in addition to the mothers), talking to fathers when calling home and not asking to speak with the mothers regarding every issue, and making an effort to acquire background information about the fathers.

#### **4.4 Increased Male Participation**

The information compiled indicates an increase in male participation since the award of the FSI grants. This participation increase resulted from both the effect of the grantee receiving the grant initially, and the grantees' efforts to build and enhance their agencies' Fatherhood programs. Grantees commented that having a fatherhood program and father-child focused activities at the Head Start centers resulted in increased father participation of all kinds:

- More frequent visits by men;
- Fewer "taxi fathers" – men who drop their children off at Head Start and pick them up at the door with no interaction with the Head Start staff or the program;
- More involvement with Home Visits and parent conferences;
- More involvement with taking part in educational offerings;
- More interest in signing up for father-child computer courses; and
- More men reading to their children.

Grantees also mentioned an increase in the numbers of men participating in Policy Councils, parents committees, in taking other leadership roles, in volunteering at the agency, and taking part on behalf of the agency in community efforts focused on fatherhood. Out of 49 grantees, 36 said they increased in male participation, one commented on a decrease, 11 were unsure, and one commented that they did not see an increase or decrease.

#### **4.5 Efforts to Track Father Participation with Literacy**

Agencies are tracking participation in literacy activities through:

- Event attendance sheets;
- How many books fathers and child are taking out from agency libraries;
- How many books are given to fathers and children;
- How many library cards were obtained; and
- How many times and for how long fathers and child read together.

The agencies have developed a number of different tracking forms for fathers and children reading together. The most frequent type of tracking is participation and attendance at events, though some agencies say that they do not distinguish between male and female participation at Parent Education or Family Fun type of events. Fatherhood coordinators had limited knowledge or no access to the numbers of fathers reading in the classroom, as classroom teachers would track this statistic.

Evaluations of father-child literacy activities have been accomplished by having fathers and children develop books together and build portfolios throughout the year. One agency has videotaped the father-child reading together throughout the year as both a motivational tool and as a means of tracking emergent literacy, the development of the child's literacy, and the father-child relationship. Several agencies stated that they had effective tracking systems and databases related to their Fatherhood Program.

Few formal efforts at evaluation or tracking are reported with respect to the development of father literacy or language development. One grantee stated that the primary evaluation of father's literacy efforts was accomplished through self-reporting. Other agencies attempted to measure father's literacy efforts by assessing the growth shown toward the goals that fathers gave themselves in the Family Plan that fathers developed during Orientation meetings. As discussed previously, some grantees mentioned that they had begun to videotape a father reading to his child in order to measure literacy development and interview the father to capture his thoughts about his progress. Some agencies developed tracking forms for hours of reading, but commented that they had not implemented procedures to collect the forms back from fathers, so tracking proved difficult on occasion.

Examples of the results of the tracking/evaluation of father's educational and literacy efforts often were not available. Grantees who did offer examples spoke of these tracking efforts as rare occurrences (a father informally asking for assistance in getting a GED, or a father asking for help with writing a resume). One individual reported that no fathers had asked about GED information, while another mentioned that staff members gave out information when asked or they spoke to fathers about the educational and job training opportunities available at their agencies.

Early Head Start Demonstrations and Fatherhood Initiative programs with longer histories of male involvement programs contributed more information on educational and development programs for fathers than the newer Fatherhood Initiative programs. In the newer programs, the staff focused effort upon getting a fatherhood program started and developing and enhancing on-going father-child literacy efforts.

#### **4.6 Positive Impact on Community**

The Head Start Fatherhood program in some communities is the first such program devoted to interest in fathers. In other areas, Head Start's Fatherhood Involvement programs join existing fatherhood efforts in the county or state and are contributing to broader programming and joint efforts to assist all males. In these communities, the community fatherhood programs are providing an opportunity for Early Head Start and Head Start fathers to take on speaking roles in the community and contribute to advocacy on fatherhood concerns.

#### **4.7 Learning Experiences for Fathers and Children**

Grantees indicated that their programs have provided children with many opportunities for the fathers and children to learn together. These programs have shown children that men can play an important role as a reader and storyteller. Additionally, these programs have shown both children and fathers that reading and learning can be enjoyable experiences. Fathers have discovered new and interesting ways to be supportive and to spend time with their children in a helpful manner. Fathers have learned about the importance of early learning and how much they count in this process. For non-resident fathers, these father-child activities open doors for increased time with their children. For low-income fathers, these activities have provided free settings in which to spend valuable time with their children.

#### **4.8 Building Libraries**

A long-term benefit of the program has been that fathers and children have acquired a growing number of their own books. For some families, these books marked the beginning of their home libraries.

Many programs gave children's books in English and in Spanish as incentives to take part in the program and to complete certain program activities. Others used gift certificates and point systems with which to purchase books as incentives. Some used funding for fathers to choose the books that the agency would purchase both for home and school. Book Fairs, Book Exchanges, and materials for making books were introduced. An additional benefit has been the creation of stronger, more varied agency libraries. Books in several languages have been purchased which feature males and fathers.

## **5. Selected Recommendations from Grantees**

Grantees made many recommendations, a complete list of which is included as Appendix E. We have selected the following grantee recommendations as the ones most relevant to developing and sustaining a successful program.

- Partnering with other agencies, and working with networks and partners.
- Conducting a survey at the beginning of the grant.
- Keeping the survey open-ended so that the grantee can get new ideas of the needs of men in the community.
- Soliciting input from all fathers before any event or program is planned.
- Making fathers feel comfortable, and letting them know that their opinions are valued.
- Having the Male Involvement coordinator go to parents directly.
- Interacting with the men as they come in the door to drop children off.
- Visiting each center in their area each month to keep fatherhood interest high.
- Providing on-going fatherhood training for all staff members.
- Inviting a father from each center to come to all-staff meetings to talk with staff about his experiences and his wishes for the program.
- Involving fathers in the training that is being offered on literacy for staff.
- Making sure that a representative for mothers is involved in planning.
- Creating and distributing a father newsletter or having a father-section in the agency newsletter.
- Bringing in representatives from Child Support to make Child Support presentations and provide information.
- Helping the men with legal services, such as driver's license suspension, paternity establishment, credit problems, parking and speeding tickets.
- Conducting activities that provide the time for fathers and children to work together on a hands-on project.
- Having a partnership with a local high school team so that team members may come in and read to the children or socialize with the children during an activity.

### **5.1 Program Retention**

Retention of the programs after the lapse of grant funding (many grants ended in January 2004) is a significant issue. Many agencies indicated that they were applying for new grant funding and commented on their hopes for additional funding for the FSI. A few grantees indicated that they foresaw difficulty in retaining the program as retentions would be handled "poorly" without funds, but these types of comments were in the minority.

Many grantees expressed enthusiasm for the goals of the FSI grant and felt that they had to continue to find the resources to get books into the hands of fathers and families and to help fathers continue to read and spend time with their children.

The following are some representative approaches the various agencies are taking to create the resources to retain the program's post-grant benefits:

- Put together funds through use of quality improvement money.
- Recognize that agencies had already invested funds from the grant in tangible materials (curricula, posters, children's books) so they had a resource and knowledge base from which to continue their efforts.
- Redeploy staff to assist fathers involved in reading with their children.
- Decentralize planning so that the delegate agencies and sites would plan their own programs.
- Look to share low-cost or free community resources.
- Assess and rewrite job descriptions annually, spreading the fatherhood responsibilities throughout all levels of staff and ensure that all staff know how they can be part of the fatherhood program.
- Balance costs within budget, retaining critical activities.
- Develop a grant writing team comprised of health staff, parents, social services, educational personnel, and the fatherhood involvement staff.
- Work to secure community investment dollars.

A coordinator of a multi-year male involvement program advised, "An agency needs to tap into all resources and partnerships in order to enhance and continue the fatherhood program and actively pursue a variety of funding."

## **6. Conclusion**

With these grants, Region V assisted grantees in helping fathers support their children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. These grants have made many agencies aware of the need to be friendlier to fathers in order to attract them to and participate in activities. The grant implementation process has provided staff members with research and information on the critical nature of the father's role, and enabled the creation of father/child literacy programs.

Many of the best practices identified in this report can be of value to other Head Start programs. Due to the unique nature of the sites and the staff composition within those sites, agencies need to assess which practices will translate to comparable sites in their states. Therefore, dissemination of the varied information as shown in the Appendixes will benefit the most grantees. Continuous staff training in fatherhood issues and programming, as well as the

education of both parents on the role of the father as one of the child's first teachers, remains a vital component for fatherhood programs. Grantees in each state acquired knowledge and experience with which to speak out and assist with building the FSI further in their own agency and to assist other Head Start programs in their areas. Recognizing staff and father talent and expertise will help achieve their fatherhood and early literacy objectives.

Fatherhood programs must be enduring if they are to be taken seriously by the community and by fathers. As one male involvement coordinator said, "You need to measure success and progress in baby steps. One person coming out is a success."

## Appendix A

### Grantees who Received the Fatherhood Special Initiative Grant

**Key:** HS = Head Start  
 EHS = Early Head Start  
 HS/EHS = Combined

ILLINOIS			
Grantee Name	Program	City	Male Involvement Year Start Date
Catholic Charities Diocese of Joliet Inc	HS/EHS	Joliet	2002
Childcare Network of Evanston	EHS	Evanston	1999
Clinton County Rehabilitation Center	EHS	Breese	2002
Community Action Agency for McHenry County Inc	HS	Woodstock	2002
East Central Illinois Community Action Program	HS/EHS	Danville	2001
Heartland Head Start Inc	HS	Bloomington	2001
Peoria Citizens Committee for Economic Opportunity Inc	HS/EHS	Peoria	2001
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale	HS	Carbondale	1999
Southern Seven Health Department	HS/EHS	Ullin	2001
Tri County Opportunities Council Inc	HS	Rock Falls	2002
Wabash Area Development Inc	HS/EHS	Enfield	2001

INDIANA			
Grantee Name*	Program	City	Male Involvement Year Start Date
Carey Services Inc	EHS	Marion	1999
Community Action of Northeast Indiana Inc	HS	Fort Wayne	2001
Community and Family Services Inc	HS/EHS	Portland	2002
Family Development Services	HS/EHS	Indianapolis	2000
Hoosier Uplands Economic Development Corp	HS/EHS	Mitchell	2001
Human Services Inc	HS	Columbus	2002

MICHIGAN			
Grantee Name*	Program	City	Male Involvement Year Start Date
Baraga Houghton Keweenaw Child Development Board	HS/EHS	Houghton	2000
Capitol Area Community Services Inc	HS/EHS	Lansing	2001
Carman School District	EHS	Flint	1997
Community Action Agency of Jackson Michigan	HS/EHS	Jackson	2001
Eight Community Action Program Inc	HS/EHS	Greenville	2003
Human Development Commission	EHS	Caro	2002
Michigan Family Resources	HS/EHS	Grand Rapids	2002
Muskegon Area Intermediate School District	HS	Muskegon	2002
St Clair County Economic Opportunity Committee	HS	Port Huron	2002
Wayne County Department of Health and Community Services	HS	Detroit	1999

MINNESOTA			
Grantee Name*	Program	City	Male Involvement Year Start Date
Anoka County Community Action Program Inc	HS/EHS	Blaine	2002
Bi County Community Action Council Inc	HS/EHS	Bemidji	2002
Child Care Resource and Referral Inc	HS	Rochester	2002
Otter Tail Wadena Community Action Council Inc	HS	New York Mills	2001
Parents in Community Action Inc	HS & EHS	Minneapolis	1980



OHIO				
Grantee Name*	Program	City	Male Involvement Year Start Date	
Child Development Council of Franklin County Inc	HS	Columbus	2002	
Clermont County Child Focus	HS/EHS	Cincinnati	2002	
Community Action Committee of Pike County	HS/EHS	Piketon	2002	
Community Action of Wayne Medina	HS/EHS	Wooster	2002	
Coshocton County Head Start Inc	HS	Coshocton	2002	
Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland	HS	Cleveland	2000	
Licking County Economic Action Development Study Inc	HS	Newark	2002	
North Central State College	EHS	Mansfield	2002	
Stark County Community Action Agency	HS	Canton	2001	
Trumbull Community Action Program Inc	HS	Warren	2002	
Youngstown Area Community Action Council	HS/EHS	Youngstown	1997	

WISCONSIN				
Grantee Name*	Program	City	Male Involvement Year Start Date	
ADVOCAP Inc	HS	Fond Du Lac	2001	
Cooperative Educational Services Agency 11	HS/EHS	Turtle Lake	2002	
Dane County Parent Council Inc	HS/EHS	Madison	2002	
Indianhead Community Action Agency	HS	Ladysmith	2003	

### Grantees who Received the Federal Early Head Start Demonstration Grant

Early Head Start Demonstration Grantees				
Grantee Name*	Program	City	State	Male Involvement Year Start Date
Community Action Agency of Jackson Michigan	EHS	Jackson	MI	2001
Community Economic Development Association Inc	EHS	Chicago	IL	2001
Family Development Services	EHS	Indianapolis	IN	2000
Next Door Foundation	EHS	Milwaukee	WI	2001
Wabash Area Development Inc	EHS	Enfield	IL	2001

\* All tables are in alphabetical order by the grantee name.

**Appendix B**  
**Fatherhood Special Initiative**  
**Phone Questions**

Agency:	
State:	
Phone Conversation Date:	
Contact Name:	
Title:	
Phone / E-mail:	
Others to contact about this program:	
Title:	
Phone / E-mail:	

Introduction

- Is this grant your first for Fatherhood/Male Involvement?
- When was your Fatherhood/Male Involvement program started?
- How many fathers were involved in your programs when this grant began?
- How many fathers are involved in your programs today?

Best Practices

- Do you have a Best Practice that you would like to recommend to others?
- What steps did you take to accomplish your Best Practice?

Major Accomplishments

- What would you say is the program's major accomplishment?
- Of all the activities you have carried out, what was the most successful?

Lessons Learned

- What was the major lesson learned?
- If you were to start this initiative today, what changes would you make?
- What would you recommend to other agencies?

Outcomes

- Have you completed a "Father-Friendly Assessment"?
- Are you working with the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity?  
(Added in November 2003)
- Have there been changes in policy / mission statement as a result of this program?
- How have you evaluated literacy development in children and fathers?
- Have there been unintended consequences due to this grant?
- How will retention of program be handled?

## Appendix C

### Best Practices and Major Accomplishments Summary

#### *1. Father-Friendly Environments:*

Best Practices	Major Accomplishments
Sending out calendars for fathers to log in the hours they spend with their child particularly in reading activities.	Using the Father-Friendly assessment and implementing the results.
Taking fathers' work schedules into account when planning activities.	Staff members now understand how uncomfortable it can be for a man when visiting a center, and how to make changes in the environment so men are more comfortable.
Providing full dinner meals for evening meetings.	The centers are more father-friendly, and fathers (as well as other significant males) feel more comfortable in the centers, especially when other fathers/males are present.
Having a release procedure for the agency to gather information about non-resident fathers and mail information to those fathers.	The centers now serve as a meeting place where men can speak freely to each other and talk about their roles in their children's lives.
Accepting all kinds of males in an activity (married fathers, co-habiting males, non-custodial fathers, and non-resident fathers).	More fathers have taken part in Home Visits and Socializations.
Interacting with each male as they enter the center (even if it is only to drop off or pick up a child) and making a connection with them.	Men hired at all levels of the agency have served as role models to the children.
Greeting the men and interacting with them as they come in the door.	Staff members have encouraged fathers to speak out and suggest what would work and what would not in terms of programming and planning.
Spending time to talk with fathers during family activities.	Opportunities have been created for men to participate in the lives of their children through literacy events and recreational activities.
Introducing fathers to the teachers so that the fathers feel more comfortable with the classroom program.	Fathers have ownership of the program in terms of planning activities for themselves and their children.
Taking photos of fathers/men and their children as a "father-friendly" catalyst for male involvement.	

## 2. Recruitment:

Best Practices	Major Accomplishments
Direct one-on-one contact with fathers/males about the Fatherhood Program is the most effective recruitment tool.	Getting out the idea of the need for father involvement.
Riding the buses in order to meet fathers face-to-face.	Getting the word out that new ideas are wanted for the program.
Involving mothers in the development of the program and recruitment of fathers/males.	Agencies noted that good outreach activities succeeded in involving members of the community with the fatherhood effort.
Assigning fatherhood outreach workers at each site.	A father's role in emergent literacy from the very beginning of the child's life is an important outreach message.
Encouraging the child to invite the father or male figure to events or programs.	The Male Involvement Coordinator paid monthly visits to each center to talk about the program and encourage greater participation.
Inviting males to start off the program - if not fathers, then husbands of staff and males from the community.	The Male Involvement Coordinator maintained direct one-on-one contact with each parent about the Fatherhood Program.
Promoting this program as a Male Involvement Program, rather than a Father-only involvement Program.	The changing and more positive attitudes of staff members toward fathers.
Starting a newsletter for the Male Involvement Program.	
Creating a "Fathers Corner" in the newsletter, where announcements cite fathers' achievements.	
Redefining the job description for Family Support workers so that outreach to fathers is included.	
Inviting parents to meetings and trainings of staff.	
Visiting families at home before the school year begins.	
Involving the community by taking presentations out to the public.	

### 3. *Planning:*

Best Practices	Major Accomplishments
Operating a year-round fatherhood program.	Staff members are learning how to get both parents involved with planning activities.
Looking at blended funding streams to develop the program and plan for retention.	Getting significant males involved in Policy Council.
Maintaining an advisory committee composed of staff members, parents, and community representatives.	Establishing a viable Male Advisory Panel increases opportunities for male leadership.
Conducting an open-ended survey at the beginning of the school year so that the agency can gain new ideas.	
Inviting fathers to make decisions so that they can describe what they want and do not want in the program.	
Ensuring that mothers are involved in planning efforts.	
Providing a variety of programs for the fathers.	
Being careful not to overload fathers' (parent) schedules and being respectful of their schedules.	
Supporting fathers' efforts in seeking employment.	
Having male speakers at workshops attended by fathers.	
Giving two copies of a book to a father and child so that they can each have a copy to read over the phone.	
Using available free and low-cost local resources.	

### 4. *Staffing and Staff Training:*

Best Practices	Major Accomplishments
Employing a male staff person who can meet and work with the fathers at all the centers.	Staff members have developed a greater awareness of fatherhood issues.
Having support from all staff for this initiative.	Staff members cited the mere involvement of fathers.
If possible, adding additional staff to support this initiative.	Agencies accomplished their goal of hiring a male fatherhood specialist and hiring a female assistant to the specialist.
Using the best materials available to train staff and fathers.	Staff members have been trained in paternity establishment.
Hiring men in each capacity in the agency so that the children see men in different roles regularly and can count on them to carry out their roles.	Increased number of fathers involved with Policy Council.
Training all staff on the important role of fathers, starting with all staff taking the self-assessment.	Increased communication between staff members and fathers.
Inviting fathers to attend staff in-service trainings.	

### 5. Programming:

Best Practices	Major Accomplishments
Conducting activities that provide the time for fathers and children to work together interactively on a hands-on project.	Staff members have taught men the importance of reading with their children regularly.
Providing a variety of experiences for fathers and children at various times of the day so that fathers with different types of work schedules could participate.	Staff members have learned how to read to their children.
Encouraging fathers and other males to work together on projects for the benefit of the children and/or the agency.	Fathers are reading in the classroom and taking part in emergent literacy activities.
Using community resources for program development.	Agencies have purchased books and put those books in the hands of families and fathers.
Involving the local fathers to make decisions on programming at each site.	Staff members have aided the fathers in developing a positive network. Fathers show up regularly, meet as a group, and call each other between meetings.
Employing active learning principles with adults who have limited literacy skills and/or English language difficulties.	Regular group sessions for fathers at each site with specific learning and hands-on activities have been successful.
Offering food at all events (e.g., Doughnuts for Dads, Snacks for Dads) to encourage men to visit the center.	Seeing fathers getting to know their children and spending quality time with their children.
Teaching fathers how they can read to their children.	More men have become involved with parent committees.
Holding a weekend retreat of workshops to help fathers get an understanding of literacy development in children.	Fathers have gained the confidence to conduct meetings by themselves.
Holding various marathon events (Fish-a-thon, Read-a-thon).	Presenting a "King for a Day" event when staff fixed breakfast for fathers and then the father and child could play together. In some cases, this was the first time the fathers had ever taken the children by themselves.
Sponsoring a Parent Literacy Conference that lets parents see the agency's work and how it tailored the program to the needs of men and all the different community cultures.	Parents are learning that being a father is about spending time with the child (not just buying gifts for the child).
Modeling to fathers how to play and interact with their children, and give the children one-on-one time.	

### 6. Collaboration and Partnerships:

Best Practices	Major Accomplishments
Working with networks, partners, and other agencies.	Working with a father on the paternity establishment issue and accompanying him to court to establish paternity.
Having a partnership with a local high school team so that the athletes read, talk, and eat lunch with the children.	Holding a Male Involvement Conference.
Bringing in representatives from Child Support to make presentations.	
Helping men with legal needs (e.g., paternity establishment).	

## **Appendix D**

### **Lessons Learned Summary**

The following is a list of “lessons learned” cited by grantees. The lessons are grouped by common and important themes that emerged during the course of the phone conversations.

#### **THEME:**

#### **Getting better acquainted with males in historically female-dominated settings.**

- Female staff members hold several misconceptions about men and fathers.
- Staff members’ opinions of men in the program are based on their own experiences with their fathers and significant males in their lives. Staff members need to separate their past personal relationships when dealing with fathers of the program.
- Fathers are intimidated when visiting the agency and do not feel welcome.
- There are fathers / male figures in the program who are distrustful of the female staff members.
- Fathers are still interested in their child’s activities even if the fathers are not at the agency for an event.
- Fathers want to be involved in their child’s lives even if the father has a strained relationship with the child’s mother.
- Transportation problems often lead to a father not participating in an event.
- Staff members experience difficulty in planning programs when they exclude the fathers.
- Men who believe in the program will recruit other men to get involved and take leadership positions.
- A female coordinator can initiate the male involvement program, but many advise that the leadership of the program should eventually transfer to a male staff member.

#### **THEME:**

#### **Understanding the mother’s role in father programs.**

- Mothers want the fathers to be involved with their child’s lives.
- Mothers are beginning to learn how a male figure’s presence can enrich a child’s life.
- Mothers recognize that fathers have a different parenting style.
- Mothers and staff members need to change their thinking about the role of men. Men can serve as educators and nurturers as well, and not fill the disciplinarian role solely.

**THEME:**

**Taking a new look at program development for fatherhood/male involvement.**

- Staff members seek out good speakers who communicate effectively with the parents without talking down to them.
- Staff members are becoming more comfortable in using local resources.
- Staff members are now including perspectives from different ethnic groups when planning a program.
- Staff members have difficulty with involving Spanish-speaking people.
- Staff members stress that the fatherhood program cannot be seen as a stand-alone program. Rather, the fatherhood program needs to be woven into the overall program and be inclusive of all parents.
- Staff members have greater success in planning father activities each autumn (beginning of the school year), when the interest is higher.
- Staff members seek out different approaches and activities so that there are several choices for the men.
- Fathers want male/child activities focused on developing a child's emerging literacy through reading and singing.
- Fathers expressed interest in developing a child's mathematical abilities.
- Fathers expressed interest in interacting with their children through hands-on activities.

**THEME:**

**Learning about staffing and co-workers.**

- Staff members need to hear from the fathers in addition to the Male Involvement Coordinator.
- Staff members have been unintentionally excluding fathers (asking to speak with the mother when telephoning home).
- Agencies need more than one staff person for this program.
- Staff members need more education about fathers and communication.
- Staff members need to have positive attitudes about the whole program.
- Agencies are striving to find the right mixes of staff to perform these duties.
- Family Service Workers need extensive training on how to work with males.



## **Appendix E**

### **Recommendations Summary**

#### **1. Father-Friendly Environments**

- Establish the fatherhood program as a resource for the fathers.
- Maintain ties with parents that are incarcerated.
- Use discussions/workshops instead of videos to educate fathers - men responded in settings where discussions could take place.
- Educate fathers on how to interact with young children.
- Find a specific productive role for fathers to have in the program so fathers feel that they are accomplishing something for the program.
- Keep the scope of the group open - let any father in the fatherhood program for the sake of a child.
- Adjust curriculum so that a male perspective is represented.
- Recognize the contributions of both parents.
- Help fathers understand that mothers need support and that children need consistency.
- Provide hands-on activities for the men to participate with their children.
- Have small get-togethers so that everyone gets individual attention.
- Recognize parents in newsletters, with prizes and special attention (e.g., present “We Care” pins for reading a certain numbers of books).
- Create a welcoming environment for the men at each center.

#### **2. Recruitment**

- Be mindful of program names. Some parents stated that a “parenting education” program implies that the mother or father does not know how to parent a child.
- Have face-to-face personal contact with fathers.
- Market the fatherhood program continually.
- Begin communications with staff and parents immediately after starting a new initiative within the program.
- Involve educators and literacy staff in communications with parents.
- Simplify vocabulary and eliminate acronyms in program materials so that the documents are easier to read.
- Create flyers, brochures, and pamphlets that are father-friendly, more readable, and inviting.

### **3. Planning**

- Perform a self-study of the program plans for the upcoming school year.
- Start programs early in the school year and encourage fathers to participate in these early activities.
- Use community events (e.g., festivals) to bring parents and children together from different counties at the start of the school year.
- Introduce the fatherhood program as part of the regular progress.
- Seek input from an initial group such as an advisory group.
- Plan events local to the community and based on the needs of each site.
- Read and review every book before the book is sent out to families.
- Involve fathers in assisting with the direction of the program.
- Schedule opportunities and events at different times so that working parents can participate at a greater level.
- Build the program in incremental steps, and evaluate its effectiveness on a yearly basis.
- Establish new goals on a yearly basis.

### **4. Staffing and Staff Training**

- Present an overview of the objectives of the fatherhood program so that all staff members understand the needs for the program.
- Identify staff members that are willing to work with and for the fathers.
- Learn about the variety and accessibility of father-friendly materials, and obtain these materials for the staff as well as the fathers.
- If possible, sustain the fatherhood program on a full-time basis with a male staff member in charge.
- Male and female staff members should work together on the program so they can help each other build the program.
- The Male Involvement Coordinator should meet with each staff person to get buy-in for the program.
- Invite more men to join the staff, even in a part-time capacity.
- Select a dedicated staff person to work with non-resident fathers.
- Provide a “Train the Trainer” program on fatherhood involvement – staff members may train others after they have been trained.
- Plan gatherings around multiple curricula.
- Invite regionally and nationally recognized speakers.
- Perform standardized, agency-wide fatherhood training for all staff, including sensitivity training.

## **5. Programming**

- Avoid “packaged programs” in favor of developing training programs specific to the needs of fathers at each local center.
- Select a literacy curriculum/program (after careful consideration) that is well respected and known. Reach out to outside programming experts in making this decision.
- Build the program methodically. An aggressive build-up may intimidate fathers (as well as mothers) from participating.
- Start with small groups for activities and events so that participants can establish comfort levels. Evaluate the success of each activity, event, or meeting.
- Bring in programmatic experts to launch the program.

## **6. Collaboration and Partnerships**

- Exercise caution when presenting a Child Support topic. Grantees commented that “stories from the street” and real life examples of enforcement frighten fathers from the program.
- Develop partnerships with literacy groups (e.g., Even Start).
- Utilize the volunteer efforts of college fraternities and sororities. Many Greek organizations actively pursue volunteer efforts in their local communities.
- Form a community advisory group.
- Reach out to the local community for involvement.
- Invite speakers from the correctional system to talk about how children can maintain ties with incarcerated parents.